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Department of Agriculture

COD-LIVER OIL IN BABY'S WINTER DIET

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The baby's diet is planned to provide the foods that will keep him well and make him grow. Of the bone-making foods he needs, milk is the best, because of the calcium and phosphorus it contains. Milk is also the best and cheapest source of the protein and fat he requires, says the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Next to milk, however, the most important item in the baby's winter diet is cod-liver oil. Milk and cod-liver oil supplement each other, and protect the child to some extent against the consequences of a lack of other foods. With cereals, they supply protein, fat, minerals, and all of the vitamins but one -- vitamin C. Tomato juice or orange juice -- at least 2 teaspoonfuls a day -- meets this deficiency, and furnishes some vitamin A, too, although he must have more vitamin A from other sources.

Cod-liver oil was found to be a useful addition to the diet long before anyone had heard of vitamins. It was often prescribed by doctors as a medicine, but nobody knew why it worked. Then it was learned that cod-liver oil contained vitamin A, and later another important vitamin -- D -- was found. This is the vitamin which is essential to prevent rickets.

Vitamin A is found in milk fat -- butter and whole milk, which are so necessary for babies. It is found in liver. It is also found in oranges and tomatoes, hence the importance of orange juice and tomato juice for babies, in addition to their value for vitamin C. Vitamin D is abundant in the yolks of eggs and in various fish oils.

By taking cod-liver oil, the baby gets his vitamin D in his food. From sunshine he gets it in his skin. The human skin contains a substance called ergosterol which is changed into vitamin D by the ultraviolet rays of the sun, and that reaction, it is believed, produces vitamin D in the skin.

Without vitamin D, the baby's bones will not develop properly, and he will have rickets -- causing crooked legs, weak arms, <sup>a</sup>contracted chest. Even when he has plenty of milk to provide the bone-making materials, the baby's body can not use those materials successfully without vitamin D. In winter, the cheapest source is cod-liver oil.

As cod-liver oil is really a food, whatever it is called, nutritionists advise mothers to manage somehow to save out 15 to 25 cents each week throughout the winter to provide cod-liver oil for each child under 2 years old.

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